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Robert J. Frail

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FRENCH CATHOLIC WRITERS AND ENLIGHTENMENT CONTRIBUTORS TO THE *ENCYCLOPÉDIE*

Robert J. Frail

*I*n a series of comprehensive and insightful essays, Jeffrey D. Burson has framed the argument of Enlightenment historiography in a Catholic context by examining some core principles regarding the assumption that “certain movements of thought entail or preclude other aspects of belief.”¹ One compelling example of this is what he refers to

¹ Jeffrey D. Burson’s works are as follows: *The Rise and Fall of Theological Enlightenment: Jean Martin de Prades and Ideological Polarization in Eighteenth-Century France* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). “Towards a New Comparative History of European Enlightenments: The Problem of Enlightenment Theology in France and the Study of Eighteenth-Century Europe,” *Intellectual History Review* 18 (2008): 173–87. “The Crystallization of Counter-Enlightenment and Philosophe Identities: Theological

as the “creative use of Enlightenment discourses by established confessional churches in Western Europe”; this compares favorably with the idea of a monastic appropriation of the Enlightenment put forward by Ulrich Lehner.² Burson and other scholars have analyzed secular patterns like veneration for nature, reliance on reason, pantheism and other modes of social utility that fit squarely into intellectual movements in large European cities or in towns where there was a substantial monastic influence; this kind of disclaimer may be applied, but it is perhaps worth noting that in most provincial Catholic areas of Europe, parish priests were largely undereducated and could barely celebrate the mass in Latin. The subversive ideals that circulated in anticlerical tracts, philosophical movements, and the memoir novel would certainly have appeared as frightening to members of the common clergy. Paul Lacroix refers to the *low clergy*, as they were then known, and offers the following observation: “The priests of the towns and villages formed, as a rule, a class worthy of the respect and affection of the people. Fathers to the poor, though generally poor themselves, consoling the wretched, they divided their time between the duties of their ministry and works of charity. They inculcated morality from the pulpit, and their practices did not belie their precepts.”³

This essay is not centered on members of the *low clergy*, but rather on those relatively privileged members of the French clergy who did indeed participate in the varied reformist activities associated with the Theological

Controversy and Catholic Enlightenment in Pre-Revolutionary France,” *Church History* 77:4 (December 2008): 955–1022. “Religion and European Enlightenment: The Case for French Exceptionalism?” *Proceedings of the Consortium of the Revolutionary Era: 1–3 March 2007* (Shreveport: Louisiana State University Press, 2008). “Abdication of Legitimate Heirs: The Use and Abuse of Locke in the Jesuit *Journal de Trévoux* and the Origins of Counter-Enlightenment, 1737–1767,” in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 7 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2005): 297–327. What is particularly refreshing about Burson’s approach is that he is able to use some of the finest scholars in the field to support the idea that the Enlightenment was not a theoretical, encompassing embrace of secular or anticlerical hostility toward established hierarchies, but rather openness to new perspectives in religious idealism in a genuinely respected Republic of Letters. This is perhaps the climate that produced the many tolerant and productive discussions among the habitués of salons or Masonic lodges where Benjamin Franklin could rub elbows with Joseph Ignace Guillotin, and where Diderot could find scholars from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives to orchestrate his great work.

² Burson, “Towards a New Comparative History,” 173. Additional information related to this idea can be found in L. W. B. Brockliss, *Calvert’s Web: Enlightenment and the Republic of Letters in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³ Paul Lacroix, *France in the Eighteenth Century: Its Institutions, Customs, and Costumes* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1963), 161–62. Originally published in 1876 as *The Eighteenth Century: Its Institutions, Customs, and Costumes: France, 1700–1789*.

Enlightenment. Burson cites numerous established critics like Peter Gay and Ernst Cassirer, among many others, to refine the thesis that the Enlightenment was hardly an enterprise in homogeneous paradigms put forward by radical thinkers all cut from the same cloth, or their detractors, and he challenges the perhaps once acceptable idea that there ever was a "simplistic teleology of an Enlightenment tending naturally toward Revolution."⁴ In addition, he observes that recent historical speculation is centered on the "religious origins of the French Revolution."⁵ This view is supported by his reference to the "different trajectories of French Enlightenment": Jansenist opposition, Gallican spins on Roman Church authority, a *dévo*t movement perhaps across Europe, and moderate Enlightenment groups like the Lockean Jesuits who rejected extremist tendencies, whether they be the attack against Christianity and the French Monarchy by radical *philosophes* or Counter-Enlightenment authors like those writing for the Jesuit publication *Le Journal de Trévoux*.⁶ In Paris, the plurality of ideas "in harmony and conflict with each other" was intensified by the long-standing tension and shifting alliances between the magistrates of the Parlement de Paris and the Faculty of Theology at La Sorbonne.⁷ All these forces cited above are described by Burton as "sociopolitical catalysts that made, from the French Theological Enlightenment, a polarized constellation of mainstream radical enlightenments facing off against ideological forces of *anti-philosophie*."⁸ In this context, it is worth noting Frank Kafka's comments:

⁴ Burson, "Towards a New Comparative History," 175. Burson includes references to the book trade and to middle-class reading habits studied by Robert Darnton and Roger Chartier. Darnton's work is listed below; for Cassirer see Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz Koelln and James Pettegrove (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).

⁵ Burson, "Towards a New Comparative History," 177. Burson refers to "a massive body of scholarship on the importance of Jansenism to eighteenth-century politics, the development of an early national consciousness in France, and the creation of French public opinion." In this context, perhaps the most important work is Dale K. Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits from France, 1757–1765* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

⁶ Burson, "Towards a New Comparative History," 178. Burson points out that this factionalism within the French Church is carefully analyzed by C. M. Northeast, *The Parisian Jesuits and the Enlightenment, 1700–1762* in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 288 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation at the Taylor Institute, 1991).

⁷ Burson, "Towards a New Comparative History," 180. Burson cites J. G. A. Pocock as one of several historians who "pluralized" the Enlightenment, in *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, *The Enlightenment of Edward Gibbon, 1737–1764* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁸ Burson, "Towards a New Comparative History," 178. Here, following Dale Van Kley's "Church, State, and the Ideological Origins of the French Revolution: The Debate over the General Assembly of the Gallican Church in 1765," *Journal of Modern History* 51 (1979):

The Encyclopedists...despite their reputation...were not a close-knit group of radicals intent on subverting the Old Regime in France. Instead they were a disparate group of men of letters, physicians, scientists, craftsmen and scholars. They did not share a common social and economic background, birthplace, schooling or career path. Their intellectual interests and accomplishments varied widely, as did their experiences with the *Encyclopédie*. They were recruited in different ways; some were paid, others, unpaid; and most contributed on their specialities while suffering no harm from the Church or State.⁹

This complex web of cross-fertilization is embedded in the philosophical discourses of the period, and a close review of the authors who contributed to Diderot's *Encyclopédie* clearly suggests divided notions over moral reasoning, natural law, epistemology, sensationalism, and materialism. One could argue that Diderot's colleagues were looking for thinkers who could absorb all the nuances and even paradoxical suggestions of these principles while arriving at a conciliarist politics of inclusion, which had an appeal to Catholic authors who were not blatantly Counter-Enlightenment. Burson points out that recent studies by Dale Van Kley offer cogent explanations that France was perhaps in a better position than other European nations to absorb these often "competing visions" because France was anchored in its own brand of national identity, and that the wellspring for social thinking was rooted in some deep commitment to an "imagined community."¹⁰ This would indeed

629–66, he establishes connections between Gallican privileges, civic humanism, and examples of patriotic reform.

⁹ Frank A. Kafker, "Fellow Project Details," The Camargo Foundation Fellowship, Winter-Spring, 1993. A well-balanced analysis of the *Encyclopédie*'s challenges to Catholic principles can be found in the entry "Encyclopedists" by C. A. Dubray in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2002, 418–21). Dubray offers a penetrating analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the *Encyclopédie* and its contributors. One point of his argument is that the "philosophers" did indeed express anti-Christian principles, but in a restrained manner. Their correspondence and salon discussions were much more antagonistic and vitriolic regarding Church and State.

¹⁰ Burson, "The Crystallization of Counter-Enlightenment," 955. Burson links three important critics to the concept of "imagined communities": Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991); David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation: Inventing Nationalism, 1680–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

separate France from other nations, especially England and Germany, where perhaps a narrower or at least elitist sense of social obligation prevailed, based either on England's Protestant ethic or Germany's Pietist Movement.

The purpose of this essay is to update the studies compiled between 1939 when Robert Palmer's *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France* appeared and 1996 when Frank Kaffker's *The Encyclopedists as a Group* was published by the Voltaire Foundation. The introduction above and the notes to it suggest that an approach to the Enlightenment as a complex junction of discursive paths in which there are still unresolved questions, and a biographical sketch of somewhat marginal figures is wholly interesting and justifiable in the context of a Catholic Enlightenment.

To this end, I offer fifteen appraisals and sometimes conjectures about "Catholic" authors who contributed to the *Encyclopédie*, and at the risk being either too inclusive or too exclusive, I define "Catholic" as someone still within the orbit of the Church, functioning as a priest or "abbé commendataire," under the protection of an established and powerful cleric, and who has not openly vilified Catholic dogma or tradition. The sheer size of the administration of Church properties is staggering. According to Paul Lacroix:

In 1763, the eighteen archbishops at the head of the ecclesiastical provinces of France had under them 109 bishops or suffragans, exclusive of the bishops *in partibus* who did not come within their jurisdiction. In these archbishoprics and bishoprics were 40,000 priests, 50,000 *vicaires* (assistant priests), 27,000 priors or chaplains, 12,000 canons, 20,000 clerks and choristers, in addition to 100,000 ecclesiastics engaged in the religious orders. . . . The monasteries numbered 740, of which 625 were *in commendam*, that is to say, presided over by assistant abbots. . . . The monks with or without a private income and belonging to the various reformed and non-reformed orders who formed the population of these monasteries numbered about 80,000.¹¹

¹¹ Lacroix, *France in the Eighteenth Century*, 138–39. See also, Robert J. Frail, *Realism in Samuel Richardson and the abbé Prévost* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), volume 65 of *Studies in Comparative Literature*, especially chapter 9: "Prévost and Other Defrocked Priests: Custodians of the Enlightenment," in which I offer comparable statistical data drawn from two other sources: the heading "abbaye" in the *Grand Larousse* encyclopedia and Louis Châtellier ed., *Religions en transitions dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

The Introduction to the Devout Life (1609) by St. François de Sales was apparently a bookshelf staple throughout the eighteenth century in France and elsewhere because it articulated the immediacy of “true Christian values”—virtue, prayer, and participation in the sacramental life of the Church, over and against false devotion and hypocrisy. Additional information about devotional literature can be found in the *Handbook of Catholic Enlightenment in France*.¹²

John Lough’s work *The Contributors to the “Encyclopédie”* (1973) includes commentaries on the fifteen authors that I have chosen to examine, and his work also gives, in most cases, the specific reference in the *Encyclopédie* where the author is introduced, and also the particular code associated with the authors.¹³ Frank Kafker produced a “Biographical Dictionary” of the contributors to the *Encyclopédie* and most of the authors that I have studied can be cross-referenced in his two books.¹⁴ Jacques Proust and Robert Shackleton contributed smaller but nevertheless curious details surrounding these Catholic authors.¹⁵ Robert Darnton studied later contributors to the *Supplément* and various appendices to the *Encyclopédie*. These contributors include authors like the abbé Bertrand who is not investigated in this study, but who receives commentary from Lough.¹⁶ A brief overview of the critical samplings of possible contributors is followed by the reasons for the choice of the fifteen listed below.

According to Kafker, there were six Catholic priests (none were prelates, such as bishops):

¹² *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe*, edited by Ulrich Lehner and Michael Printy (Leiden: Brill, 20). See also, B. Plongeron, “Recherches sur l’Aufklärung catholique en Europe occidentale, 1770–1830,” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 16 (1969): 555–605.

¹³ John Lough, *The Contributors to the “Encyclopédie”* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1973).

¹⁴ Frank A. Kafker (in collaboration with Serena L. Kafker), *The Encyclopedists as Individuals: A Biographical Dictionary of the Authors of the “Encyclopédie”* in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 257 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1988) and Frank A. Kafker, *The Encyclopedists as a Group: A Collective Biography of the Authors in Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 345 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996). The latter book was reviewed by David Eick in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34 ([2000]: 458–61) in comparison with Maria Leca-Tsiomis, *Écrire l’Encyclopédie. Diderot: de l’usage des dictionnaires à la grammaire philosophique* in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 375 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999).

¹⁵ Jacques Proust, *L’Encyclopédie* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965), and Robert Shackleton, “The *Encyclopédie* and the Clerks” (Zaharoff Lecture for 1970) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

¹⁶ Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie, 1775–1800* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1979) and Geraldine Sheridan, *Nicolas Lenglet Dufresnoy and the Literary Underworld of the “Ancien Régime,”* in *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 262 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1989).

The abbé Nicolas Lenglet-Dufresnoy (1674–1755); the abbé De Compt (from a parish near La Rochelle); the abbé Charles Millot (curé at Loisey, in the diocese of Toul, Châlons-sur-Marne, in the Duchies of Lorraine et Bar) (1717–1769); the abbé Edme-François Mallet (1713–1755); the abbé Claude Yvon (1714–1791), and the abbé Jean-Martin de Prades (1724–1782). He also mentions former Jesuits Alexandre Deleyre (1726–1797) and Jean Joseph Rallier des Ourmes (1701–1771), and a former Oratorian César Chesneau Dumarsais (1676–1756).

According to Jacques Proust, early editors included the abbé André Adrien Pluche and the abbé Jean-Paul de Gua de Malves—little is known about each—and contributors: the abbé Louis Guillaume le Monnier (1717–1799), the abbé Jean Baptiste de la Chapelle (1710–1792), and the abbé Jean Pestré (1723–1821). Kafker studied Pestré carefully, along with better known authors: Mallet, de Prades, and Yvon.

Shackleton cites Gua de Malves, Pluche, and the abbé Sallier as advisors, along with marginalized but well-known abbés such as Raynal, Mably, and Condillac. Then he cites well-known Catholic contributors: The abbés André Morellet (1727–1819), de Prades, Pestré, Yvon, and Mallet, and lesser-known figures: “The abbés Pierre-Augustin Boissier de la Croix de Sauvages (1710?–1795), Jean-Roger Schabel De Compt, Curé de l’Aleu (Province of Aunis), and Charles-George Fenouillot de Falbaire de Quingey (1727–1800).”

In order to simplify the focus of this inquiry, I will turn my attention to the following fifteen “Catholic” contributors to the *Encyclopédie*. In each case I will list the individual contributions to the *Encyclopédie* and try to identify any points of confusion. Some have been studied extensively, in which cases I will limit myself to a few brief comments and links. For others there is little information available, so I will pass quickly by them. This should leave a core group of rather engaging authors, who—by their very ambiguity as Catholic authors—might begin to answer some of these challenging questions. What was the relationship between Diderot, D’Alembert, and other editors and these Catholic authors? Why were they selected? What risks did they take within their own religious groups and identifications? How did the wave of censorship and publishing control affect these authors? What are the connections to these authors regarding the Dissolution of the Jesuits, Freemasonry, the Jansenists, the Gallican Church,

and the secular values of the Enlightenment?¹⁷ These fifteen authors are as follows, in alphabetical order, by family name only: De Compt / Deleyre / Dumarsais / Fenouillot / La Chapelle / Le Monnier / Lenglet / Mallet / Millot / Morellet / Pestré / (de) Prades / Rallier / Sauvages / Yvon.

Roman numerals after a name refer to the biographical listing in the *Encyclopédie*, according to John Lough; the page reference in parentheses is to where this is found in Lough's work. De Compt: Lough: VI: vii. (76). One article on Brandy (*L'eau de vie*)—possibly an insider's joke, considering all the associations with the name and the subject: see Kafker's *BD*, 83. Deleyre (Delaire): Lough: V. ii. (77). Two articles—on Religious Fanaticism and the manufacture of "straight pins." According to Kafker, he took Jesuit vows early in life, but drifted into a career of liberal journalism and pre-revolutionary politics. His accurate article on straight pins supposedly impressed Adam Smith and he mediated the disputes between Rousseau and Diderot. The article on fanaticism was apparently heavily edited by Diderot in order to tone it down. Dumarsais: Lough: I: xli (79) Symbol F. Educated in an Oratorian seminary, he worked primarily as an editor regarding issues of grammar and may have contributed to more than one hundred articles, many unsigned: for example, "L'Éducation and "Le Philosophe." Opinion is divided as to his true religious sentiments; he avoided polemics and maintained a low profile and his work on grammar and language was certainly appreciated, but some suspected him of free-thinking attitudes in the liberal Marseilles community where he was active as a lawyer and tutor. His possible contribution (he was long dead [1676–1756]) when the quintessential article "le Philosophe" often attributed to him appeared in December of 1765. Here are a few excerpts from this manifesto:

La raison est à l'égard du *philosophe* ce que la grâce est à l'égard du chrétien. La grâce détermine le chrétien à agir; la raison détermine

¹⁷ A comprehensive discussion of these issues is found in Burson, "The Crystallization of Counter-Enlightenment and Philosophe Identities" and in Paul Lacroix, *France in the Eighteenth Century*, notably 144–55, and of course in many other sources. Thomas A. Kaiser's study of Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, brother of Étienne Condillac, traces the typical pattern of this subdeacon, "abbé commendataire," and points out how "la régle" (the system by which the Gallican Church maintained control over revenues and government subsidies for education distributed among the nobility who held title to these properties and to the clergy who taught at private schools). In addition, secular or non-ordained clerics "en commande" were often appointed to oversee cloistered abbeys and convent schools; it goes without saying that the economic benefit to the Church was enormous and that some of these "abbés commendataires" rose into positions of great prominence.

le *philosophe*. Les autres hommes sont emportés par leurs passions, sans que les actions qu'ils font soient précédées de la réflexion: ce sont des hommes qui marchent dans les ténèbres; au lieu que le *philosophe*, dans ses passions mêmes, n'agit qu'après la réflexion; il marche la nuit mais il est précédé d'un flambeau.

[Reason is to a philosopher what grace is to a Christian. Grace impels the Christian to act, reason impels the philosopher. Other men are carried away by their passions; their actions are not preceded by reflection: they are men who walk in darkness. A philosopher, on the other hand, even in moments of passion, acts only after reflection; he walks through the night, but he is preceded by a torch.]¹⁸

Fenouillot: Lough: XIV.568 (81). These four articles are again by another Catholic educated member of the upper class who drifted away from a career as a clergyman, and led a somewhat dissolute life without embracing extremism. One article dealt with ethics, and another similar article was entitled "Insensibilité" (one of many strange materialistic philosophy entries). Two others are detailed accounts of the production and manufacture of salt, about which he was an expert. He was a great admirer of Diderot.

La Chapelle: Lough: I. xlii. (86) Symbol E. Another fallen-by-the-wayside Catholic, he impressed many early in his career as a teacher of Mathematics and a translator of medical books. He worked as an editor of all the articles in the *Encyclopédie* that had arithmetic details, for example, "L'Arithmétique" and "La Géométrie élémentaire," but the historical record is unclear as to his religious training. Although an admirer of Voltaire, he was a fairly pious believer and prolific author who struggled with his finances.

Le Monnier: Lough: I: xliii (88). He wrote six articles dealing with astronomy, electricity, and magnetism, and he was recognized throughout his life as an astute physician to the Court, an upholder of royal authority, and a devout Catholic. His connection to the Church is flimsy, yet it seems likely that he was from an early age an "abbé commendataire" or that he worked

¹⁸ Mathilde Bombart, *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2008), 33–39. The English translation is by Nelly S. Hoyt and Thomas Cassirer, *Encyclopedia Selections: Diderot, D'Alembert and a Society of Men of Letters* [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955], 283–89).

closely with well-established Catholic scientists. He married in 1773, and again to his young niece in 1798 when he was over eighty years old.

Lenglet: Lough: III.xv (88) Symbol A. Like so many other questionable figures, he was an established authority in history, geography, alchemy, and languages, while his connection to the Church is murky. Apparently an ordained priest, he was constantly under surveillance for unorthodox interpretations of Scripture and often incarcerated as a free thinker, yet he contributed as an editor to more than fifty articles regarding hermeneutics without asking for a fee. Deemed by Jean-Baptiste Rousseau as "le plus assuré menteur qui fut jamais" (the greatest liar who ever lived), this gifted and productive scholar never openly challenged Catholic dogma. Mallet: Lough: I.xli (90) Symbol G. Before receiving his doctorate, he was a curé in a small town, yet he went on to become one of the most prolific contributors to the *Encyclopédie*, producing perhaps two thousand articles; long after his death in 1755, his signature appeared next to numerous articles in subsequent editions. Most of the short articles that he wrote on commerce, social and political history, economics, and literature were drawn from other sources, but his longer works on ecclesiastical history are impressive. Mallet received the doctorate in theology in 1742 at a relatively young age for such an accomplishment, and soon after he was named professor of theology at La Sorbonne. Known as an open-minded thinker and an ardent royalist, his association with the philosophes made some Jesuits and Jansenists question his intentions; however, Bishop Boyer (the Dauphin's tutor) cleared him of any charges of irreligion and rewarded him with the canonry at Verdun in 1754.

Millot: Lough: XVII.753 and 770 (92). He contributed two articles on philosophy: "Affabilité" and "Entêtement," each capricious in tone and content. He was a parish priest in several towns in the Duchies of Lorraine and Bar, especially at Loisey, where he served for sixteen years. When he died, he was curé at Laimont and a member of the Société littéraire de Châlons-sur-Marne. As with many others, his relationship with the editors is uncertain.

Morellet: Lough: VI.vi and VII.xviii (93) Symbol H. He wrote six articles on religion and philosophy. After studying at the Collège de Navarre and the Sorbonne, he received the *licence* in theology in 1752. He met Diderot during the de Prades affair and in 1755, upon the death of Mallet, he was brought on as a replacement. Later, however, he clashed with Diderot who suspected him and others of secretly trying to produce an edition of the *Enclopédie* in Prussia. When the French government condemned the work in 1759, Morellet stopped writing for it. He turned his attention to economic theory and he was elected to the Académie Française in 1785. His

career was upset by the Revolution and he welcomed Napoleon; he retained his sinecure as an abbé but often expressed the idea that the Church should be more rational.

Pestré: Lough: I.xli (96) Symbol C. He worked as an assistant to Yvon and de Prades in Volume I, and contributed nine articles on philosophy to Volumes II and III; these three young divinity students shared lodgings in Paris in the early 1750s. These essays, ranging from "Baconisme ou philosophie de Bacon," "Bonheur," "Philosophie des Canadiens" (which studies the Huron tribe), "Cartésianisme," and others fit squarely into the main patterns of Enlightenment thinking; they argue against superstition and extreme scholasticism in favor of sensory data and epistemology in order to understand human consciousness. Nevertheless, Pestré rarely departed from Christian dogma and reinforced as often as possible the moral purpose of serving Jesus Christ. Some of his articles were amended by the editors with notes in a Postscript. Even though Pestré was not ostracized by the de Prades affair, and despite close connections with the abbé Raynal and with Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (the powerful administrator and economic theorist), he was never able to jump-start a career and lived off a modest benefice and income from tutoring.

(de) Prades: Lough: I.xli (97). Volume I announces the forthcoming contributions by de Prades and Yvon, but because of the fallout over his doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne, which he defended by citing secular philosophical ideas put forth by Diderot and D'Alembert, his only essay in the *Encyclopédie* is the fifteen-page study "Certitude." De Prades takes a conventional Catholic position regarding skeptics, but was suspected of undermining the power of miracles by suggesting that they could be understood by scientific reckoning. Some historians contend that Yvon had a strong influence over some of his more controversial pronouncements. De Prades was certainly wily enough to flee France before "the archbishop of Paris condemned his thesis, the Parlement de Paris declared him an outlaw, and the Pope added his denunciation," as Kafker describes the situation (*The Encyclopedists as Individuals*, 317). De Prades was mentored by Voltaire at the court of Frederick II at Potsdam and after writing an apology for his poor judgment, he was reinstated back into the Church by the pope, and the Faculty of Theology recognized his degree. He may have served as a spy in Prussia during the Seven Years' War and he spent several years in the prison at Magdeburg. His later years in Silesia were fairly prosperous, and he died there in obscurity.

Rallier: Lough: V.i; VI.vi; VII; viii (97). He wrote thirteen articles on mathematics and one on religion spread over Volumes V–VIII, all repeated in

subsequent editions, with occasional supplementary remarks by D'Alembert. Educated as a Jesuit priest, he taught for several years in Paris and Rennes, before renouncing his vows in 1727. He became a *conseiller* (court judge) in Rennes where he had a long and distinguished career. His articles on various subjects, ranging from algebra and physics to accounting and number theory were expanded into essays that he collected, which were later published by the Académie Royale des Sciences. Some of his contemporaries suspected him of Deist impulses; however, he apparently remained close to Catholic values throughout his life and one of his daughters entered an Ursuline convent.

Sauvages: Lough: II.i (99). The foreword to Volume II mentions Sauvages's essays "Toiles peintes" and "le Sel de marais" but Kafker (356) points out that he may have contributed other unsigned articles on various topics like "Hôpital," "Infirmier," "Mûrier," "Salines," and "Vers à soie." The full-blown essay on "Toiles peintes imitées des indiennes qui se fabriquent en Europe" in Volume XVI represents an important debate at this time, and notes from his private papers suggest that he is the undisputed author of this piece. French cloth-makers had become dependent on Indian materials, and Sauvages clearly points out that French-made fabric could be equally as competitive. He was an expert on optics, mineralogy, honey-making, silk-worm cultivation, and the Provençal language. At the age of sixty-one, he was ordained a priest and served as chaplain to the Oratory of Sainte-Marie at Alais in the Languedoc region.

Yvon: Lough: I: xli; I.xliv; II.iv; III.905 (103) Symbol X. Yvon was caught up in the backlash associated with the abbé de Prades and is seen as a misunderstood scapegoat. He wrote several articles on metaphysics, logic, morality, and the history of philosophy for the *Enclopédie*, and even though his signature does not appear next to similar articles after Volume II, historians are in general agreement that he remained active as a contributor to later volumes with as many as fifty essays on philosophical principles like "Âme," "Athée," "Agir," "Amitié," "Amour," "Adultère," "Action" and "Dieu," most of which have intimations of impiety. During his years of exile in Holland, Yvon remained active as an editor and polemicist, infuriating many mainstream Catholic thinkers with his work *Liberté de conscience resserrée dans les bornes légitimes* (1754), which was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books. He apparently joined a Freemasonry lodge in Amsterdam, but after ten years in exile, he softened his defiant tone and (although still spurned by most of his associates in the clergy) he was able to secure patronage in Tours, where he became historiographer to the comte d'Artois and a position as canon of Coutances. In *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France*, Robert

Palmer begrudgingly admires Yvon's attempt to reconcile Catholicism with Enlightenment values, and concludes that Yvon lived in "a state of mind almost pathetically confused."¹⁹

Unlike the Catholic *Aufklärung* in Germany and the mixing of Enlightenment ideals within a Catholic context in other parts of Europe, the fifteen contributors evaluated here, like the *Encyclopédie* in general, did not call for political reform. Those who lived through the French Revolution (Deleyre, Fenouillet, Le Monnier, Morellet, Pestré, and Sauvages) suffered reversals of fortune and hardship, and even from the beginning did not embrace its agenda. As Frank Kafker observes: "those who lived to experience the Revolution came to believe that the new order was even less appealing than the old one."²⁰ With its emphasis on Natural Law, Rational Humanism, Ingenuity in Craftsmanship, Secular Morality, and Scientific Empiricism, the *Encyclopédie* certainly represents all the key values of the Enlightenment; the bold strokes and challenges are there, but many of the original ideas and truly radical pronouncements are covered over with sarcasm and irony. For example, there is no attempt to debunk St. Anselm's argument for existence by "Design." However, St. Anselm's reputation as a scholar is treated sarcastically in the following comments: "Le dogme le plus saint n'est vrai que relativement à tout le genre humain...de grands officiers, et ne sont pas comptés pour tel par le P. Anselme."²¹ Although it is tempting to suggest that Diderot deliberately hired authors as Catholic "plants" in order to mollify Church authorities, there were numerous inconsistencies and breaches in Church orthodox thinking, as mentioned above, to make this unrealistic. Furthermore, high-level scholars among Jansenists and Jesuits for the most part welcomed the *Encyclopédie* as an enormous "vade mecum" of human progress and a testimonial to the human intellect.

According to Kafker (*The Encyclopedists as a Group*, 116–17), the de Prades episode, which led to a suspension of publication, "made the Church

¹⁹ Robert R. Palmer, *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), 119.

²⁰ Kafker, "Fellow Project Details." This commentary is much more largely developed than the comments found in the preface to *The Encyclopedists as a Group* where he observes: "The Encyclopedists were not a company of obedient soldiers led by a few generals in a campaign to destroy the Old Regime. They were instead a varied collection of men of letters, physicians, scientists, craftsmen, scholars, and others, each frequently following his own bent with little central direction. The *Encyclopédie* became not a party statement, but a great compendium of knowledge filled with contradictions, a mélange of ideas, some progressive and some conservative" (xiii).

²¹ *Encyclopédie de Diderot et d'Alembert*; see diderot.alembert.free.fr.

and State more vigilant. . . . From then on, any attempt within the *Encyclopédie* to bolster religion by the use of reason and empiricism invited reprisals. . . . the presence of liberal Catholic ideas was certainly attenuated.” Despite such controversy, Diderot was able, almost by supreme force of will and charisma, to engage 160 prominent authors in this enterprise throughout its long publishing history, from the Paris folio edition in seventeen volumes, from June 1751 to December 1765, along with the completion of the eleven volumes of plates from 1765 until 1772; this does not include the *Supplément* with additional plates, the index or *Table analytique*, or the Italian and Swiss octavo editions, the last of which came out in Berne in 1782. In the end there were about 72,000 articles (44,000 main articles, 28,000 secondary articles, and 2,500 illustration indices), 1,600 plates, with 25,000 subscribers—half of whom lived outside France. In total 4,250 copies of the *Encyclopédie* were printed. Despite its veiled social criticism and its appeal to modernity, perhaps the one great weakness of the *Encyclopédie* and of the philosophes in general is the lack of impartiality, summed up instructively by Will and Ariel Durant, as follows:

The contributors had too simple a view of human nature, too sanguine an estimate of the honesty of reason, too vague and understanding of its frailty, too optimistic a prospect of how men would use the knowledge that science was giving them. The *philosophes* in general, and Diderot in particular, lacked historical sense; they seldom paused to inquire how the beliefs they combated had arisen, and what human needs, rather than priestly inventions, had given them birth and permanence. They were quite blind to the immense contribution of religion to social order, to moral character, to music and art, to the mitigation of poverty and suffering.²²

²² Will and Ariel Durant, “Diderot and the *Encyclopédie*,” chapter 19 in *The Story of Civilization, Part X: The Age of Voltaire* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 649.